

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02

INR-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 INRE-00 /055 W

----- 068793

O R 061420Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5885

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ABD DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T SANA 1780

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

FOR UNDERSECRETARY SISCO AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, YE, SA, US, UR

SUBJECT: YARG INTENTION TO ACCEPT SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 158879

1. SUMMARY: AFTER MEETINGS WITH ME AND SAUDI MILITARY
ATTACHE TODAY, FONMIN ABDULLA AL-ASNAG INFORMED ME LATE THIS
AFTERNOON THAT YARG WILLING TO POSTPONE DECISION RE
SOVIET OFFER OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE UNTIL DEPUTY COMMANDER-
IN-CHIEF AND CHIEF OF STAFF AHMED AL-GHASHMI VISITS

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RIAYDH ON AUGUST 10. WHILE NO LONGER WORKING AGAINST

ARTIFICIAL DEADLINE, STRONGLY URGE THAT EMBASSY JIDDA CONTINUE FOLLOW CLOSELY THIS MATTER WITH SAG SO THAT NO FURTHER COMPLICATIONS OCCUR OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

2. I WAS ABLE TO SEE FONMIN ABDULLA AL-ASNAG ON JULY 6 AT 10 AM AND AS INSTRUCTED CONVEYED TO HIM SUBSTANCE OF POINTS RAISED IN REFTEL. FOLLOWING THIS PRESENTATION A LONG CONVERSATION ENSUED DURING WHICH AT OUTSET ASNAG APPEARED NOT TO BE CONVINCED BY THRUST OF THE ARGUMENTATION BUT CERTAINLY WILLING TO LISTEN. FINALLY, HOWEVER, ASNAG AGREED THAT IT WAS IN YARG'S INTEREST TO CONVEY THE NEWS OF SOVIET OFFER TO SAG DIRECTLY AND IN MY PRESENCE TELEPHONED SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE (ASNAG SAID HE WOULD NOT DEAL WITH THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS UNTRUSTWORTHY AND DECEITFUL). AL-ASNAG ALSO AGREED THAT HE WOULD ARRANGE MEETING FOR ME WITH PRESIDENT HAMDY SO THAT I MIGHT MAKE SAME PRESENTATION TO HIM.

2. ABOUT AN HOUR AFTER I RETURNED TO THE CHANCERY, ASNAG TELEPHONED TO SAY HE HAD NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO SPEAK TO THE SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE, BUT WOULD KEEP ME INFORMED. HE SUGGESTED THAT I MIGHT WISH TO HOLD OFF REPORTING TO WASHINGTON UNTIL I HEARD FROM HIM.

3. LATER SAME AFTERNOON, ASNAG CALLED ME AGAIN TO SAY THAT HE HAD JUST FINISHED LONG TALK WITH THE SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE WHOM HE INFORMED OF THE RECENT SOVIET OFFER. THE SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE THEN TOLD ASNG THAT SAG IS NOW READY TO MOVE QUICKLY AND PROMPTLY ON THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. THE SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE STATED THAT "USG LETTERS OF OFFER" ARE PRESENTLY IN RIYADH AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF YEMEN'S DEPUTY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND CHIEF OF STAFF AHMED AL-GHASHMI FOR SIGNATURE. SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE ALSO TOLD ASNAG THAT HE INTENDED TO INVITE GHASHMI TO COME TO RIYADH IMMEDIATELY. ASNAG SAID THAT HE ADVISED THE SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR GHASHMI TO COME TO RIYADH AFTER THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT WHICH IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 3. ASNAG SUGGESTED AUGUST 10 FOR GHASHMI'S VISIT AND SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE AGREED. ASNAG TOLD ME THAT IN VIEW OF THIS DEVELOPMENT
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AND AS RESULT OF MY MUCH-APPRECIATED PRESENTATION THIS MORNING, HE IS VERY ENCOURAGED AND WILL RECOMMEND TO PRESIDENT HAMDY THAT YARG MAKE NO DECISION REPEAT NO DECISION RE SOVIET OFFER UNTIL AFTER GHASHMI VISITS SAUDI ARABIA. ASNAG SAID THAT IF GHASHMI IS ABLE TO SIGN LETTERS OF OFFER IN RIYADH, HAMDY AND YARG WILL BE IN EXCELLENT POSITION TO REJECT SOVIET OFFER. IF NOTHING TANGIBLE IS ACHIEVED IN RIYADH, YARG WILL REASSESS

SITUATION AND MORE THAN LIKELY PROCEED TO ACCEPT SOVIET PROPOSALS. ASNAG CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE HOPED USG WOULD UNDERSTAND FROM THIS DECISION TO POSTPONE ACCEPTANCE OF SOVIET OFFER THAT YEMEN GENUINELY WISHES TO WORK WITH USG AND SAUDI ARABIA AND IS PREPARED TO WAIT A LITTLE LONGER FOR ITS FRIENDS TO ACT.

4. COMMENT: MY SESSION THIS MORNING WITH AL-ASNAG LASTED ALMOST 2 HOURS WITH MUCH OF TIME SPENT IN GOING OVER AND OVER POINTS SPELLED OUT IN REFTEL. IN ATMOSPHERE OF CANDOR AND FRIENDLINESS, I EMPHASIZED TO ASNAG DANGER WHICH WOULD FACE YEMEN AS RESULT OF A PRECIPITOUS ACTION AT THIS TIME PARTICULARLY AFTER HAMDI'S YEAR OF PRAGMATIC AND WISE LEADERSHIP. ASNAG WAS FINALLY CONVINCED AND AGREED TO ADVISE THE PRESIDENT TO PROCEED SLOWLY. HIS LATER MEETING WITH THE SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE OBVIOUSLY GAVE HIM ADDITIONAL ARGUMENTATION TO USE WITH HAMDI. THE NEXT STEP IS OF COURSE UP TO THE SAUDIS TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE ATTACHE'S PROMISES TO ASNAG. I NEED NOT DWELL ON WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE SAUDIS DO NOT MOVE NOW. MEANWHILE, ALTHOUGH WE ARE NO LONGER WORKING AGAINST AN ARTIFICIAL DEADLINE, I STRONGLY URGE THAT EMBASSY JIDDA BE INSTRUCTED TO PURSUE THIS MATTER CLOSELY WITH THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF SAUDI GOVERNMENT SO THAT NOTHING HAPPENS OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS TO CAUSE FURTHER COMPLICATIONS.

5. I ASSUME THAT LETTERS OF OFFER TO WHICH ASNAG REFERS ARE THOSE PERTAINING TO "IMPACT PACKAGE" EXTRACTED FROM FIFER REPORT. IF SO, THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE SUFFICIENT TO SERVE AS ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIET OFFER, UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY SOME SPECIFIC SAG PROPOSALS TO IMPLEMENT EXPEDITIOUSLY OVERALL YAR MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. (EMBASSY JIDDA MAY BE ABLE TO CLARIFY EXACTLY

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WHICH L/O'S SAG MILATT WAS REFERRING TO). WOULD ALSO HOPE WE CAN CONVINCE SAG TO KEEP YARG BETTER INFORMED OF ITS ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAM THAN IT HAS APPARENTLY DONE IN PAST.

SCOTES

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NNN

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